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EEC: libel

The Rumanian connection

FROM OUR BRUSSELS CORRESPONDENT

Mr Jean-Marie Le Pen's extreme right-wing National Front party, which won 10 of the French seats in last June's election to the European parliament, has collected a rich harvest of abuse from many sides. But perhaps the most suprising attack involves one of its less well known members, Mr Gustav Pordea.

Mr Pordea is a Rumanian refugee who came to France in 1947 and became a French citizen in 1983. Somewhat improbably he was given the fourth position on Mr Le Pen's ticket and was duly elected to the European parliament last summer. On the eve of the election the pro-Socialist newspaper, Le Matin, published an article about Mr Pordea which claimed that he was suspect to other Rumanian emigrés because of his apparent friendliness to the regime of President Nicolae Ceausescu. The paper also alleged that he had passed himself off as an honorary consul of the Polish government-in-exile. According to the prime minister of this government, no such post had ever existed.

Mr Pordea promptly sued Le Matin for libel, and the case opened on February 1st. The same day Le Matin published an article containing a long interview with the former deputy head of the Rumanian secret service, General Ion Pacepa, who had himself defected to the west in 1978. Now Mr Pordea, according to his lawyer, intends to bring a second action against Le Matin for alleging in this article that he worked for the Rumanian intelligence service.